

SECRET

24 February 1960

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Conversation with Miss Virginia Reeves - 24 February 1960

Following is a summary of conversation with Miss Reeves during lunch.

Miss Reeves intended to return to New York where her sister is employed at Harpers Publishers and then at the week's end to proceed to Rome by air. She will return definitively to the United States and begin work on her own writing. She stated she had been in Italy five years and it had been a good experience, but having now reached her thirtieth year she felt it necessary to begin to settle down. She expects to return to the United States in the fall after a 3-month motor trip through Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the USSR. She plans to do the trip with a friend (female) who is on the language teaching staff of Columbia, a Mrs Ragusa. Miss Reeves plans to use her own vehicle--a Mercedes--for the trip. She plans to devote a good part of the trip to photography.

Her intention to leave Italy permanently has raised the question of what will happen to Mr. Dadone after she is gone. She will give up the Via Poliziano apartment, and she intends to help him find a smaller place. The letters she has had from him indicate that he is slowly regaining his health and apparently his morale is better. At the present time she stated, he has the poet, Ezra Pound, as a house guest with him in the Rome apartment. Miss Reeves explained that she was a friend of Pound's daughter, Mary, and his son-in-law, an Egyptologist, who originates from the Tyrol. Pound since his arrival in Italy has spent some time in the Tyrol at his son-in-law's "castle" and at Rapallo. He had wanted to go to Rome and apparently it was his daughter's idea that Dadone look after him in the capital.

Miss Reeves apparently feels a very strong tie to Dadone because she indicated she thought after her departure she might arrange for some small subsidy for him through his daughter, Vittoria, who has a position on the office staff of a ceramics firm in Milan.

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In response to a query, Miss Reeves discussed in detail the events in Libya leading up to the auto accident and Dadone's subsequent return to Rome. She appeared to be particularly interested in establishing whether there would be any possibility for Dadone to continue his collaboration. She described in summary terms what she knew of the talks that had taken place in Rome between [ ] and Dadone. Apparently she was specifically concerned with determining whether Dadone's termination in Rome was a unilateral and unappealable act. [ ] explained that he had not followed the developments of Dadone's work in recent years and did not know nor could he judge the details of what had occurred, but that those with whom he had discussed Dadone's predicament here felt a responsibility to achieve a result which Dadone would regard as more or less satisfactory. It was impossible, however, for someone to sit in Washington and insist that a relationship based on reciprocal confidence and esteem be maintained by others unless those actually concerned shared these feelings. For a number of reasons, most importantly, Dadone's age and physical condition, [ ] said apparently the attitude in Rome regarding him had changed; therefore, it was difficult to foresee a substantial modification in the future relationship. This did not mean that Dadone was not esteemed or that he would be forgotten. In general terms [ ] at this point indicated that he had a letter on the way to Dadone via [ ] stating these things and suggesting that another attempt be undertaken to arrive at a result which would be satisfactory to him.

COMMENT: Miss Reeves' proposed motor trip to the USSR may provide an operational opportunity. Her U.S. passport presently designates her as a photographer. [ ] suggested during the course of the conversation that she might get better pictures behind the iron curtain if she went without the formal designation as a photographer. Miss Reeves is actually an amateur photographer and at the end of the conversation she stated that she would have her passport changed in order to eliminate the professional reference. It is obviously impossible to judge Miss Reeves' operational capabilities from a single meeting or to acquire the necessary insight into her personality. [ ]'s tentative conclusion is that she would probably respond favorably to an operational proposal. Before leave-taking [ ] indicated that the possibility of a recontact in Rome before she left Italy for her Iron Curtain trip could be left open.

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